UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/52/7 (Chap. II, Part IV)
8 October 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-second session
Agenda item 116

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999

First report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*

PART IV. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

IV.1. Under sections 7 to 15 (part IV) of the proposed programme budget, provisions of $294,792,100 (before recosting) are included for international cooperation and development. These comprise the proposed estimates for the Department for policy coordination and sustainable development ($43,137,200) in section 7; Africa: New Agenda for Development ($5,087,000) in section 8; the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis ($48,702,700) in section 9; the Department for Development Support and Management Services ($26,075,000) in section 10; UNCTAD ($107,470,900) in section 11A; the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO ($22,326,600) in section 11B; UNEP ($8,582,500) in section 12; the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) ($11,795,600) in section 13; crime control ($5,411,300) in section 14; and international drug control ($16,203,300) in section 15.

* The present document contains part IV of chapter II of the first report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. Chapter I has been issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/52/7). The complete first report will be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/52/7/Rev.1).

97-26737 (E) 211097

/...

Sections 7, 9 and 10. Policy coordination and sustainable development; Economic and social information and policy analysis; and Development support and management services

IV.2. The Advisory Committee recalls that in his letter dated 17 March 1997 to the President of the General Assembly (A/51/829) the Secretary-General indicated:

> "Integrating support for policy formulation, analytical and normative functions and relevant technical cooperation activities will serve to reinforce the necessary critical mass available at Headquarters for this indispensable aspect of the work of the Organization and the overall effectiveness of the Secretariat ... The Secretariat has a central role in integrating substantive support to the concerned intergovernmental bodies, but this role is now diffused among the three Headquarters Departments mentioned above [i.e. the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the Department for Development Support and Management Services]."

Accordingly, the Secretary-General announced that those three Departments would be merged into a single department and some of the functions and activities of the Department for Development Support and Management Services would be redistributed. The Committee was informed that revised budget estimates would be submitted for a single department. In that connection, the Committee notes that following its discussions with representatives of the Secretary-General on the subject, in his report of 11 September 1997 (A/52/303, paras. 7A.1-7A.60), the Secretary-General has outlined the programmatic and financial consequences of the actions and recommendations relating to the work of a new Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the rationale for which was described in his letter of 17 March 1997 to the President of the General Assembly (A/51/829) and in his report of 14 July 1997 (A/51/950, paras. 138-142).

IV.3. The Secretary-General's estimates for sections 7, 9 and 10 amount to $117,914,900 for the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the Department for Development Support and Management Services, or about 4.8 per cent of the total budget of $2,479,298,600 (before recosting). The provisions reflect a resource growth of $1,198,900, or a 2.8 per cent increase for the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development and $1,426,500 or 3.0 per cent for the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and a decrease in resources of $736,400 or 2.7 per cent for the Department for Development support and Management Services, as compared with 1996-1997 appropriations. Projected extrabudgetary resources for 1998-1999 amount to $12,738,000 as compared with estimates of $19,609,200 for 1996-1997 or a 35 per cent decrease for the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, $7,526,200 as compared with $6,681,500 for 1996-1997 or 12.6 per cent increase for the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and $163,770,700 as compared with $164,653,900 or a 0.5 per cent decrease for 1996-1997 for the Department for Development Support and Management Services (tables 7.1, 9.1 and 10.1). Upon request, the Advisory Committee was informed that a further decrease in extrabudgetary resources was expected as a result of a 50 per cent reduction in the UNFPA contributions to the Department for Economic and Social Information

and Policy Analysis. The Committee notes with concern the decrease in the projections of extrabudgetary resources for 1998-1999.

IV.4. As indicated in paragraph 7.2, in 1998-1999, the programme of work of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development includes facilitation and promotion of enhanced policy coordination and greater cooperation and collaboration among the organizations of the United Nations system in the economic and social areas, in particular, through the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its subsidiary bodies. In that connection, the Advisory Committee requested information on the number of meetings held and the cost of the machinery of the Administrative Committee. The Advisory Committee was informed that in 1997 the Administrative Committee and its 20 subsidiary committees and subcommittees would hold 185 meetings (83 days); however, no information was provided with respect to the number of meetings planned for 1998-1999 and their cost implications. As regards conference services provided to the meetings of those bodies, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Administrative Committee itself required simultaneous interpretation and translation of documents in English and French, but that subsidiary bodies worked in English only. The meetings of the Administrative Committee and its subsidiary bodies were held on a rotation basis in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi and other United Nations offices, as well as at the headquarters of the specialized agencies. The Committee is of the view that the number of meetings and the cost of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its machinery should be more transparent. To that end, the Committee requests the Secretary-General, as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to include in the next budget information in that regard, as well as information on the subsidiary machinery of the Committee.

IV.5. As indicated in table 7.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development for the biennium 1998-1999 is 196 (113 Professional and 83 General Service), representing a decrease of 15 regular budget posts (4 Professional and 11 General Service), as compared with the total of 211 regular budget posts for the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in table 7.3, the total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 24 (18 Professional and 6 General Service), representing an increase of 2 extrabudgetary posts (1 Professional and 1 General Service), as compared with the total of 22 extrabudgetary posts for the biennium 1996-1997.

IV.6. In addition, the Committee was informed that two gratis personnel (type 1), one P-5 and one P-4/3, for the Global Modelling Forum and Agenda 21, respectively, were expected to continue during the biennium 1998-1999. Upon request, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development had 26 vacant posts (18 Professional and 8 General Service). The Advisory Committee notes the high number of vacant Professional posts.

IV.7. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 7.8 and 7.83 and tables 7.3 and 7.18 that, as at 31 December 1998, the resources related to combating desertification, particularly in Africa (sect. 7, subprogramme 5), would be discontinued. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/180 of 16 December 1996, the resources proposed under subprogramme 5 for the interim secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, represented the requirements for the activities to be undertaken in 1998 only. The Committee points out that the 11 posts under subprogramme 5 (one D-2, one D-1, three P-3/4, one P-5 and five General Service) are not included in the

staffing tables of section 7. The Committee is of the view that the information presented with regard to the post requirements in section 7 lacks transparency and is potentially misleading. The Committee believes that the 11 posts should have been reflected under subprogramme 5 in the corresponding staffing tables of section 7, indicating in footnotes that the financing of those posts would be discontinued as at 31 December 1998 (see chap. I, para. 73). Furthermore, the Committee requests that the Secretary-General, in the context of the next programme budget, provide information on current and envisaged arrangements, if any, with conventions served by the United Nations.

IV.8. With respect to the programme of work of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development for 1998-1999, the Advisory Committee sought clarification on the extent to which intergovernmental bodies that oversee the work of the Department (e.g. the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Commission on Social Development) have examined the programmatic proposals of the Secretary-General. The Committee was informed that intergovernmental bodies had taken note of the relevant Department's programme of work, with the exception of the programme on combating desertification. In the case of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission for Social Development, a few specific comments were also made.[1] The Committee was provided with a list of parliamentary documentation for each major organ, indicating the type of servicing projected for 1998-1999, as well as a tabulation of the actual meetings held and reports submitted in 1994-1995, under implementation in 1996-1997 and estimated for 1998-1999.

IV.9. The Advisory Committee requested information on the impact that the budget reductions in 1996-1997 had on the implementation of the Department's mandated work programme and as to how the Secretary-General intended to dispose in 1998-1999 of those outputs deferred, postponed or curtailed in 1996-1997. The Committee was provided with information on the impact that the reductions had on the work of the Division for the Advancement of Women and on that of the Division for Policy Coordination and Economic and Social Council Affairs (see also A/C.5/51/53, paras. 24 and 25). The Committee notes that the mandated activities for the advancement of women were significantly curtailed and that in a number of areas the scope of work in 1998-1999 would be at the 1996-1997 level. The Committee is of the view that the resources requested by the Secretary-General for the Department for 1998-1999 may be limited in relation to the proposed programme of work and that, consequently, there may be built-in inefficiencies and constraints to carrying out the work programme successfully in 1998-1999. Furthermore, in the Committee's opinion, it is not clear from the information received that the Secretariat had sought the guidance on this matter from the relevant intergovernmental bodies that oversee the work of the Department.

IV.10. As indicated in paragraph 7.41 (c) (iii), the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development will maintain liaison, as required, with 1,700 non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. In paragraph 7.36, the Secretary-General has requested an amount of $399,000 as a contribution by the United Nations to the financing of the activities of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service for 1998-1999. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was informed that, owing to the sharp increase in the number of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with Economic and Social Council (from 1,500 in 1996-1997 to 1,700 in 1998-1999) and the resource constraints in 1996-1997, the Department had found it impossible adequately to fulfil the mandate of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 to strengthen United Nations/non-governmental organization relations through more interactive processes such as seminars and conferences.

The Advisory Committee is aware that budgetary provisions related to non-governmental organizations are contained in other sections of the budget. In that connection, the Committee requested information on the total level of resources proposed for non-governmental organizations for the biennium 1998-1999. The Committee regrets that such information was not provided.

IV.11. The Advisory Committee believes that the time has come to appraise the impact on the United Nations programme budget of the large increase in non-governmental organizations involved in the work of the United Nations since administration and cost implications will become more critical in view of the financial constraints facing the Organization.

IV.12. As indicated in table 9.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis for the biennium 1998-1999 is 258 (142 Professional and 116 General Service), representing a decrease of 20 regular budget posts (6 Professional and 14 General Service), as compared with the total of 278 regular budget posts for the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in table 9.3, the total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 30 (21 Professional and 9 General Service), representing an increase of one extrabudgetary post as compared with the total of 29 extrabudgetary posts for the biennium 1996-1997. In addition, the Committee was informed that gratis personnel contributed for 1996-1997, that is, one P-5 for advice in the area of national accounts and three P-4/3 for macroeconomics and statistical work, were expected to continue in the biennium 1998-1999. Upon request, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, the Department had 38 vacant posts (27 Professional and 11 General Service).

IV.13. The programme of work of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis derives its legislative authority from a broad body of intergovernmental mandates provided by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and its Statistical Commission and Commission on Population and Development. Furthermore, as indicated in paragraph 9.3, some new dimensions have been added to its programme by the action programmes adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

IV.14. The Advisory Committee was informed that the Department's work programme had been reviewed and endorsed by its intergovernmental bodies. However, as indicated in chapter I with regard to the budget as a whole, the Committee points out that it is not clear from the Secretary-General's budget proposal what programme activities and outputs were proposed in direct response to specific requests by the competent intergovernmental machinery and which had originated from the Department itself. The Advisory Committee believes that there should be an accurate costing of the implications of the decisions of intergovernmental bodies as they relate to the programme of work.

IV.15. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 9.39 that the staffing requirements for 1998-1999 of subprogramme 2, Population, include 26 posts in the Professional category and above, as in 1996-1997. Although no abolition of posts is proposed for this subprogramme, one post at the P-5 level is proposed for reclassification to the P-4 level "to reflect enhanced functions in the area of migration". Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the rationale for the downgrading of the post was to realize further economies. The Committee recalls that the Secretary-General had requested this post at the P-5 level in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997,[2] in

view of the importance of covering the issues of international migration. Under the circumstances, although the Committee recognizes the Secretary-General's authority to reclassify posts up to the level of P-5, he should have explained his action in the case better. In that connection, the Committee recalls what it has indicated in chapter I, paragraphs 20 and 72.

IV.16. As indicated in table 10.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the Department for Development Support and Management Services for the biennium 1998-1999 is 148 (60 Professional and 88 General Service), representing a decrease of 10 regular budget posts (1 Professional and 9 General Service), as compared with the total of 158 regular budget posts for the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in table 10.3, the total of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 57 posts (43 Professional and 14 General Service), representing a decrease of one Professional. Upon request, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, the Department had 12 vacant posts (4 Professional and 8 General Service).

IV.17 The Advisory Committee was provided with a revised organizational chart proposed for 1998-1999. The Committee notes from the chart and paragraph 10.25 that a P-5 post is proposed for redeployment from the Vienna Reconstruction Unit to the Office at Geneva (from subprogramme 2, Environment and social development management, to subprogramme 1, Public administration, finance and development). The Committee recalls that this P-5 post was transferred, in the context of the 1996-1997 programme budget, from the Office at Geneva to the Vienna Unit so that economies could be realized.[3] The Committee notes that the Department has requested separate provisions of $2,300,600 for an Executive Office (one P-5, one P-4/3 and seven General Service) under programme support. The Committee trusts that, as noted above in paragraph IV.2, savings will be realized in administration and programme support with the merging of the executive office functions of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the Department for Development Support and Management Services.

IV.18. It appears to the Committee that in a number of cases posts are proposed for abolition solely because they are vacant. As discussed in chapter I, the Committee believes that it is necessary to come to some clear understanding of the criteria that should apply for the abolition of posts. In the view of the Committee, the functions of the vacant posts proposed for abolition may well be of a continuing nature and necessary to deliver mandated programmes of the United Nations in the economic and social areas.

IV.19. The Advisory Committee was not provided with evidence that the publication programmes of the three Departments had been fully reviewed and endorsed by the competent intergovernmental bodies. In that connection, the Committee recalls what it stated in paragraph VII.8 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997[4] and paragraph 113 of chapter I. In the opinion of the Committee, it has also not been demonstrated that all publications of the three Departments fulfil a clear identifiable need, that they do not duplicate other publications inside and outside the United Nations and that they are produced in a cost-effective manner, also taking into account feedback from the readership. The Advisory Committee recommends that the intergovernmental machinery of the new merged department encompassing units of the three former Departments become more actively involved in an in-depth review of its publications programme. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee requests the Secretary-General to explore the use of new methods and technologies for the production and dissemination of publications in a more

economical manner (i.e. further use of CD-ROMs and the Internet as preferred media for dissemination of economic and social statistics).

IV.20. The Committee requests a better division of labour between UNCTAD and the Headquarters departments dealing with economic and development issues in studies concerning such fields as trade, investment and development (see sect. 11A, para. 11A.31). The Committee was unable to obtain, for example, a clear explanation as to how such collaboration was achieved on such annual publications as the World Economic and Social Survey. From the current budget submission, there is little evidence that an evaluation has been made to ascertain whether or not there is duplication of published materials emanating from the various units within the United Nations and, based on readership, what publications should continue to be issued on an annual basis and what others on a different basis. The Committee notes that, subsequent to its discussions with representatives of the Secretary-General on the subject, in paragraph 142 (b) of his report of 14 July 1997 (A/51/950), the Secretary-General indicates that the new Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNCTAD will undertake a review of their activities in the macroeconomic area in order to strengthen their cooperation and rationalize and enhance United Nations work in this area.

Section 8. Africa: New Agenda for Development

IV.21. Under section 8 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General estimates regular budget requirements of $5,087,000 (before recosting) for 1998-1999 for the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, as compared with $4,365,800 appropriated for 1996-1997, or a 16.5 per cent increase. Extrabudgetary resources are projected at $2,890,900 for 1998-1999, as compared with estimates of $1,915,500 for 1996-1997, or an increase of 50.9 per cent (table 8.1). The implementation of programme activities under this section will be under the joint responsibility of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, ECA and the Department of Public Information.

IV.22. Posts requirements under section 8 for 1998-1999 (table 8.3) include 19 regular budget posts (12 Professional and 7 General Service), reflecting an additional post at the P-4/3 level. Temporary posts to be financed from extrabudgetary resources are projected at seven posts (four Professional, two General Service and one Local level), showing a reduction of one P-4/3 post.

Section 11A. Trade and development

IV.23. As indicated in paragraphs 11A.1-11A.3, at its ninth session, held at Midrand, South Africa, in April 1996, UNCTAD adopted far-reaching reforms that included a streamlined intergovernmental machinery, improved working methods, a reduced number of meetings and a restructuring of the secretariat. The Conference decided that the UNCTAD programme of work should concentrate on four areas: globalization and development; investment, enterprise development and technology; international trade in goods and services and commodities issues; and services infrastructure for development and trade efficiency. The Conference also decided that programme issues of least developed, landlocked and island developing countries, sustainable development, poverty alleviation, the empowerment of women and cooperation among developing countries should be treated as cross-cutting issues and be integrated into every aspect of the UNCTAD work programme (para. 11A.3).

IV.24. In addition to the quadrennial conference, UNCTAD's streamlined intergovernmental machinery consists of the Trade and Development Board and three subsidiary bodies, the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities, the Commission on Investment, Technology and Related Financial Issues and the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development (para. 11A.4). Previously, the Trade and Development Board's subsidiary machinery had included nine bodies.[5] Each of the commission of the Trade and Development Board may convene expert meetings of not more than three days' duration, with the total number of meetings not exceeding 10 per annum (para. 11A.5).

IV.25. Resources for 1998-1999 are estimated at $107,470,900 (before recosting) for UNCTAD. The provision reflects a resource decrease of $2,755,400 or 2.4 per cent from the 1996-1997 appropriations. Projected extrabudgetary resources for 1998-1999 amount to $44,088,100 as compared with $39,508,300 for 1996-1997.

IV.26. As indicated in table 11A.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for UNCTAD for the biennium 1998-1999 is 394 (227 Professional and 167 General Service), representing a decrease of 53 regular budget posts (31 Professional and 22 General Service), as compared with the total of 447 regular budget posts for the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in table 11A.3, the total of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 32 (13 Professional and 19 General Service), representing an increase of 3 General Service extrabudgetary posts.

IV.27. The proposed post reduction includes 11 posts to be transferred to the regional commissions' budgets for 1998-1999, as follows: three posts to ESCAP (one P-5, one P-3 and one Local level), three to ECLAC (one P-5, one P-4 and one Local level), three to ECA (one P-5, one P-4 and one Local level) and two to ESCWA (one P-5 and one Local level). These 11 posts were already allocated to the UNCTAD/regional commissions joint units in 1996-1997 and their activities were implemented from the headquarters of the various regional commissions. The Committee trusts that this development will not adversely affect the interaction between UNCTAD and the regional commissions in substantive activities of common interest. The UNCTAD staffing proposal for 1998-1999 also includes the reclassification of one D-2 post to the Assistant Secretary-General level and the conversion of a regular budget temporary D-2-level post to established status. Accordingly, the actual number of posts proposed for abolition is 43 posts (25 Professional and 18 General Service). Upon request, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, UNCTAD had 64 vacant posts (41 Professional and 23 General Service).

IV.28. The Advisory Committee recalls that in section III, paragraph 26, of its resolution 50/214 of 23 December 1995, the General Assembly approved the establishment of a P-4 post for the follow-up to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and requested the Secretary-General to fill the position on a priority basis. In that regard, upon request, the Committee was informed that the position had not yet been filled on a permanent basis. The Committee regrets this and trusts that urgent action will be taken.

IV.29. The Advisory Committee notes from table 11A.2 that, after the far-reaching reforms encompassing "a streamlined intergovernmental machinery, improved working methods, a reduced number of meetings and restructuring of the secretariat of UNCTAD" (para. 11A.2), there is a proposal for a reduction of 2.4 per cent in UNCTAD's resource requirement for 1998-1999. The Committee

notes that there is a 4.9 per cent reduction in the provision for posts but provisions for other staff costs (i.e. general temporary assistance and overtime) increase by 14 per cent, for consultants by 7.2 per cent and for furniture and equipment by 44 per cent. Reductions proposed for travel and contractual services in the regular budget are largely offset by substantial increases in those categories of expenditure under extrabudgetary resources.

IV.30. Provisions for consultants and ad hoc expert groups amount to $2,677,900 under the regular budget and $22,010,000 under extrabudgetary resources. Under the regular budget, these include $13,600 for external evaluation of the management and programme implementation (para. 11A.22), $637,700 for globalization and development (para. 11A.31), $1,092,600 for investment enterprise development and technology (para. 11A.42), $421,900 for international trade in goods and services and commodities (para. 11A.54), $245,100 for services infrastructure for development and trade efficiency (para. 11A.63), and $255,600 for issues related to least developed, landlocked and island developing countries (para. 11A.71). The Advisory Committee sought clarification as to how many of the consultants would also serve as members of the ad hoc expert groups, since, as indicated in paragraph 11A.31, a consultant will assist in the preparation of the ad hoc expert group on economic cooperation among developing countries. The Committee was provided with a detailed breakdown of the programme of work of the consultants and of the ad hoc expert groups under each subprogramme.

IV.31. The Committee notes that the increased provisions for consultants ($513,600) and for ad hoc expert groups ($124,100) are required "to ensure that the full programme of work can be fulfilled with the reduced complement of staff that have been requested above" (para. 11A.31). From the information provided, the Advisory Committee is of the view that the estimates for consultants and ad hoc expert groups appear to be more than what will be required to cover the cost of specialized consultancy expertise not available in the secretariat for the preparation of mandated studies and reports. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that a large number of studies are included in the UNCTAD work programme on the initiative of the Secretariat. Furthermore, the Committee points out that in paragraph 11A.54 (a) $275,900 is requested to prepare, inter alia, "country-specific studies on the dynamic effects of the Uruguay Round agreements on development", with no details concerning the number of such studies. In the Committee's opinion, related estimates, in various instances, would cover the cost of supplementary staff services in addition to those already available. The Committee is, therefore, of the view that there is a need to identify more clearly the work to be carried out by consultants, ad hoc expert groups and the staff of the UNCTAD secretariat.

IV.32. In table 11A.7 and paragraph 11A.18, post requirements of the Office of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD reflect an increase of an additional post at the Assistant Secretary-General level. In paragraph 11A.7 it is explained that a D-2 post is proposed for reclassification to the Assistant Secretary-General level in view of the increased responsibility that the demands of strategic planning and management of the new structure place on the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference. It is also proposed to convert another D-2 post from a temporary to an established basis in subprogramme 2, Investment, enterprise development and technology (see table 11A.14). The Committee has no objection to these requests for the reasons given by the Secretary-General.

IV.33. With reference to the UNCTAD publication programme, the Advisory Committee recalls its observations in paragraphs IV.34 to IV.36 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.[4] The

Committee had indicated that, in addition to the parliamentary documentation, there was a proliferation of publications issued by UNCTAD, including a number of recurrent and non-recurrent publications and published material, such as newsletters, bulletins, handbooks, fact sheets and pamphlets. The Committee reiterated its concern regarding the potential for duplication of activities, especially as regards published material, between UNCTAD and other entities within the United Nations. The Committee also noted that there was no evidence of a comprehensive evaluation of the UNCTAD publications programme so as to ascertain whether or not all publications currently being issued should be continued (see chap. I, paras. 113 and 114).

IV.34. In that connection, the Advisory Committee was informed by representatives of UNCTAD that a detailed review of its publications had been made in 1996. From the report United Nations publications: cost-effectiveness in implementing legislative mandates prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit (A/51/946, para. 55), the Committee also notes that a complete list of publications proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 has already been made available to Member States for their review. The Committee notes, however, that the report of the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget on its twenty-seventh session[6] provides no evidence that such a review was undertaken by the Working Party.

IV.35. As indicated in paragraphs 11A.12 and 11A.39 (a) (i), the UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery also includes the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, which provides overall direction to UNCTAD's related programme of work. The Commission, composed of 53 members, meets biennially and reports to the Economic and Social Council. The Advisory Committee notes that the reports to be submitted to the Commission at its fourth session, in 1999, are to be decided by the Commission at its third session, in 1997. In the Committee's opinion, this renders questionable the basis for formulating the estimates for the relevant non-recurrent publications listed in paragraph 11A.39 (b) (ii).

IV.36. In paragraphs 11A.29 (b) (iii), 11A.39 (b) (iii), 11A.52 (b) (iv) and 11A.61 (b) (iii), a large number of technical projects are described relating to computer software packages and materials that UNCTAD will furnish to member States. The Advisory Committee was informed that the related estimates covered would be under extrabudgetary resources and that the computer software and materials were geared primarily for use by developing countries. They include booklets, technical notes, user guides, glossaries and administrators' manuals; interactive teaching materials; computerized statistical databases; and reproduction and dissemination of information in electronic format, such as CD-ROMs and through the Internet. The Committee was informed that the software packages required regular maintenance and upgrading and that, in view of the precarious extrabudgetary resource situation, UNCTAD was considering the possibility of charging a small fee to users to allow for continuing support by the UNCTAD secretariat. The Committee recognizes the importance of those services to the developing countries. In view of the resource situation, the Committee encourages UNCTAD to pursue this course of action without delay to ensure that there is no interruption of services, in particular to the least developed countries. The Committee is of the view that, with respect to those countries, UNCTAD should be flexible in charging user fees. In that connection, the Committee recalls that it had recommended that the Secretary-General explore fully the possibility of generating revenues from the sale of on-line United Nations database information services, as well as from the production and sale of recurrent publications.[7]

Section 11B. International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO

IV.37. As indicated in paragraph 11B.7 the administrative and financial arrangements for the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT (ITC) were agreed upon between the secretariats of the United Nations and the former General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1974 and reported upon to the General Assembly (A/C.5/1533 and A/C.5/1604). Under these arrangements, ITC is a subsidiary organ of both the United Nations (acting through the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)) and GATT. Since 1995, GATT responsibilities have been taken over by the World Trade Organization (WTO).

IV.38. The Advisory Committee was provided with the exchange of letters, dated 29 September 1995 between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of WTO on the relations between these two organizations. It was agreed that the arrangements and practices described in document A/AC.179/5 of 9 March 1976 in respect of the United Nations/GATT relationship provide a suitable basis to continue to guide relations between the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. With respect to ITC, it was agreed to recommend to the responsible intergovernmental organs that present arrangements governing the status of ITC as a joint body be confirmed and renewed with WTO subject to revised budgetary arrangements as called for by the General Council of WTO.

IV.39. As indicated in paragraph 11B.8, on 3 April 1995, the WTO General Council decided that the ITC budget would be subject to the same preparation and reporting procedures as the WTO budget itself. Accordingly, the ITC budget would cover a calendar year and would be presented in Swiss francs. Furthermore, the budget would be formulated by the ITC secretariat using exchange rates and inflation factors to be decided upon jointly between the ITC and the WTO secretariats in consultation with the United Nations.

IV.40. As indicated in paragraph 11B.9, ITC proposes to start, with the biennium 1998-1999, the new budgetary procedures endorsed by the WTO General Council prior to the concurrence of the General Assembly. Upon inquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, in May 1997, an outline of the ITC budget was presented orally to the WTO Finance and Budget Committee and that, in October 1997, the ITC budget will be submitted to that Committee, which will then report to the WTO General Council. The proposals to the Assembly on the level of the appropriation to finance the United Nations share of the ITC annual budgets would continue to be based on relevant Assembly resolutions and the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations. The ITC annual budget proposals for 1998 and 1999 will be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-second and fifty-third sessions, respectively.

IV.41. The Advisory Committee notes with concern that the arrangements entered into by the Secretary-General with the Director-General of WTO, in the exchange of correspondence of September 1995, have not yet been submitted to the General Assembly. The Committee is of the view that the agreement between the secretariats of the United Nations and the former GATT in 1974 is still in force until the Assembly reviews the agreement between the United Nations and WTO.

IV.42. The Advisory Committee considers it essential that both the General Assembly and the WTO General Council have the views of the Committee before acting on the budget proposals of ITC. The Committee recommends that financial and budgetary arrangements of ITC include provisions for the ITC secretariat to submit its full budget proposal to the Committee for consideration at its spring session in the year preceding the start of the relevant budgetary period, and not in October.

IV.43. As regards the proposed estimates for the biennium 1998-1999, the Advisory Committee notes that, at this stage, the Secretary-General is requesting a provisional maintenance budget of $22,326,600 (before recosting). The level of the proposed appropriation for financing the United Nations share of the ITC budget has been set at its 1996-1997 cost-sharing level. No details were provided to the Committee on the breakdown of this contribution. The Committee therefore cannot take a position on the United Nations share at this time. The Committee will revert to this matter upon receipt of proposals to revise existing procedures for ITC and the ITC budget which would be prepared in accordance with agreed procedures.

Section 12. Environment

IV.44. Under section 12 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General estimates regular budget requirements of $8,582,500 (before recosting) for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for 1998-1999, as compared to $8,231,100 for 1996-1997, or a 4.2 per cent increase. Extrabudgetary resources are projected at $235,908,900 for 1998-1999, as compared to $224,609,800 for 1996-1997, or an increase of 5 per cent (see table 12.1).

IV.45. The Advisory Committee points out that the UNEP extrabudgetary resource projection for 1998-1999 may not be attainable. As indicated in paragraph 12.6, the Governing Council of UNEP, in its decision 19/22 of 7 February 1997, approved an appropriation of $75 million for Fund programme activities (against a proposal of $80 million), or 17 per cent lower than the budget originally approved for the biennium 1996-1997 ($90 million). As shown in table 12.1, the actual resources for Fund programme activities for 1996-1997 amounted to $68,499,300, or a drop of 24 per cent from the original estimate of $90 million. By the same decision, the Governing Council approved a management and administrative support costs budget of $27.5 million for 1998-1999 (against a proposal of $32.7 million). In addition, an extraordinary appropriation of $1 million was approved by the Governing Council, comprising $500,000 for studies requested by the Governing Council for activities directly related to the implementation of improved management and administrative practices by UNEP, and $500,000 for the costs associated with the anticipated special session of the Governing Council in the event that these costs are not covered by the regular budget of the United Nations. The Committee notes from paragraph 126 that UNEP will be reporting to the Governing Council on the implementation of decision 19/22 in the latter part of 1997.

IV.46. As indicated in table 12.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for UNEP for the biennium 1998-1999 is 39 (22 in the Professional category and above, 6 General Service and 11 Local level), representing a decrease of 4 regular budget posts (1 Professional and 3 Local level), as compared with the total of 43 posts for the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in table 12.3, the total number of extrabudgetary posts is 600 (296 in the Professional category and above, 98 General Service and 206 Local level), representing a decrease of 191 extrabudgetary posts (71 Professional, 37 General Service and 83 Local level), as compared with the total of 791 extrabudgetary posts for the 1996-1997 biennium. In addition, the Committee was informed that one gratis personnel (Junior Professional Officer) assists the UNEP Regional Office for North America. Upon request, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, UNEP had 9 vacant posts against the regular budget (one P-5, six P-4, one P-3 and one Local level). Proposed posts for abolition are one P-5 and three Local level posts (see para. 12.7).

IV.47. The Advisory Committee notes the marked reduction in extrabudgetary posts proposed for 1998-1999 in conjunction with the foreseen sharp drop in contributions to the Environment Fund. Nevertheless, the Committee is of the view that the UNEP staffing table still remains top-heavy as compared to other programmes of the United Nations system, with 17 D-2 and 26 D-1 posts (see table 12.3), of which 3 D-2 and 1 D-1 are financed from the regular budget. The Advisory Committee notes that this issue has been discussed at length in the Office of Internal Oversight Services (see A/51/810, paras. 39-42). Further, it notes that the UNEP Governing Council, in its decision 19/29 B of 4 April 1997, requested the Committee of Permanent Representatives (i.e. "representatives of all States Members of the United Nations and members of its specialized agencies and the European Community, accredited to the United Nations Environment Programme, whether based in Nairobi or outside" (UNEP Governing Council decision 19/32 of 4 April 1997)), taking into account the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the review of UNEP and the administrative practices of its secretariat, including the United Nations Office at Nairobi, to make an assessment of the functioning of the secretariat of UNEP and to make specific recommendations to the Council at its twentieth session as to how to make the secretariat more efficient, effective and transparent.

IV.48. The Advisory Committee notes with concern that UNEP faces a marked decline in resources accompanied by serious shortcomings in its management and administration. These have been extensively discussed in the report of the Board of Auditors on the Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme for the biennium ended 31 December 1995[8] and in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (A/51/810). The Committee notes that the Secretary-General concurred with the recommendations contained in section VIII of the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. The Committee intends to follow up on the matters discussed in paragraphs IV.45 to IV.47 above, in the context of its examination of the revised estimates for the management and administration support costs budget of UNEP for 1998-1999.

IV.49. UNEP regional representation is addressed in paragraphs 12.18 to 12.21. The Regional Offices for North America in New York and the Regional Office for Europe at Geneva are funded in part from the regular budget (see para. 12.18). Upon inquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the New York Office covers annually about 200 meetings, with very limited staff. The work was carried out with the assistance of loaned personnel and a Junior Professional Officer. The Committee notes that the Governing Council of UNEP, in its decision 19/31 of 7 February 1997, requested the Executive Director to strengthen the regional offices of UNEP by providing them with appropriate functional and administrative capabilities to enable decentralized implementation of regional environmental programmes and priorities, as developed by regional and subregional ministerial meetings. The Committee cautions against UNEP spreading itself too thinly in the process of decentralization of operations (see also A/51/810, paras. 35-38). Unless the financial situation of UNEP improves, the administration and other expenditure required for the decentralized structure might adversely affect the capacity of UNEP to deliver its mandated programmes.

IV.50. Table 12.12 shows the sources of extrabudgetary resources projected for 1998-1999 by specific trust fund. The Advisory Committee notes from the report of the Governing Council of UNEP on the work of its nineteenth session[9] that the Council undertook an extensive review of the management issues and cost of administering UNEP trust funds. The Executive Director had reported to the Council on an interim analysis of the cost to UNEP of administering trust funds and, in particular, whether that cost is covered by 13 per cent administrative

support charged levied on trust funds. The Executive Director's interim analysis concluded that several factors point to the likelihood that the real cost of administering trust fund programmes might actually be higher than can be stated using the current methodology.[10] It was proposed to maintain the current arrangements while keeping them under review. The Committee notes that, in its decision 19/24 B of 7 February 1997 on management issues and the cost of administering trust funds, the Council requested the Executive Director to fulfil decision 18/44 in a more comprehensive manner by identifying the full administrative and management costs incurred by the individual trust funds and UNEP. The Committee is of the view that systematic reviews such as those undertaken by the Governing Council of UNEP can serve as an example for other intergovernmental governing bodies in their reviews of activities funded by trust funds.

IV.51. In its decision 19/32, the Governing Council created a 36-member inter-sessional High-Level Committee of Ministers and Officials in Charge of Environment, which will meet at Nairobi annually and assume some of the duties and responsibilities of the Governing Council. In the same decision, the Governing Council also formalized the establishment of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, which will hold four regular meetings a year, and decided that an appropriate budget would be allocated by the Governing Council for the two subsidiary organs. The financial implications of the decision would not be borne by the Environment Fund and should be within the financial provisions currently available for meetings of the Governing Council.

IV.52. As indicated in paragraph 12.84 (m), during 1998-1999, under subprogramme 5, Global and regional servicing and support, the activities of UNEPNET/Mercure global communications system will continue. The Mercure satellite communications project has been the subject of detailed comments by the Advisory Committee[11] and the Office of Internal Oversight Services (see A/51/810, paras. 130-133). The Committee has also requested the Board of Auditors to conduct a special audit on the Mercure project. The Committee notes that in section II, paragraph 7, of its decision 19/22 of 7 February 1997 the Governing Council authorized the redeployment of telecommunications and electronic services and the Mercure system from the management and administrative support costs budget into the Fund programme activities budget, resulting in the abolition of 11 management and administrative support costs posts (5 Professional and 6 General Service); the redeployment of the Resource Mobilization Unit from the management and administrative support costs budget into the Fund programme activities budget, resulting in the abolition of 7 posts (3 Professional and 4 General Service). The Committee reiterates its view on this matter that, taking into account the nature of services to be provided through the Mercure system, the costs for the implementation, management and maintenance of the system should be covered and presented under the management and administrative support costs budget of UNEP[12]. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the Executive Director include the costs of the Mercure system and the Resource Mobilization Unit in the revised management and administrative support costs budget for 1998-1999 to be submitted to the Governing Council through the Committee in the latter part of 1997.

Section 13. Human settlements

IV.53. Under section 13 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General estimates regular budget requirements of $11,795,600 (before recosting) for the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) for 1998-1999, as compared to $11,731,700 for 1996-1997, or a 0.5 per cent increase. Extrabudgetary

resources are projected at $80,950,900 for 1998-1999 as compared to $78,922,300 for 1996-1997, or an increase of 2.6 per cent (see table 13.1).

IV.54. As in the case of UNEP, the Advisory Committee is concerned with the continuous resource decline faced by Habitat and its serious administrative and financial management shortcomings. The Committee has commented on these matters in some detail.[13] These issues have also been reviewed and discussed extensively in the report of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for the biennium ended 31 December 1995[14] and by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in its report on the review of the programme and administrative practices of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (A/51/884). The Committee notes from the report of the Commission on Human Settlements on the work of its sixteenth session that, in its decision 16/29 of 7 May 1997, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to take any necessary action to provide Habitat with the capacity to improve its financial and administrative management.

IV.55. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that in paragraph 20 of its resolution 51/177 of 16 December 1996 the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Commission on Human Settlements, to ensure more effective functioning of the Centre by, inter alia, providing sufficient human and financial resources within the regular budget of the United Nations. The Committee notes that in its resolution 16/8 of 7 May 1997, the Commission provided the Secretary-General with guiding principles to take into account, in undertaking the comprehensive and in-depth assessment requested by the Assembly in its resolution 51/177, and requested the Executive Director of the Centre to report to the Commission at its seventeenth session, to be held in 1999, on the implementation of resolution 16/8.

IV.56. As indicated in table 13.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for Habitat for the biennium 1998-1999 is 66 (42 in the Professional category and above, 2 General Service and 22 Local level), representing a decrease of 7 regular budget posts (2 Professional and 5 Local level), as compared to the total of 73 regular budget posts for the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in the table, the total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the biennium 1998-1999 is 151 (70 in the Professional category and above and 81 Local level), representing an increase of 10 extrabudgetary post (2 Professional and 8 Local level), as compared with the total of 141 extrabudgetary posts for the biennium 1996-1997. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, Habitat had 10 vacant posts against the regular budget (1 D-1, 5 P-3, 2 P-2 and 2 Local level). Two P-3 and five Local level posts are proposed for abolition (see para. 13.5).

IV.57. As indicated in paragraph 13.2, the 1998-1999 programme of work reflects significant programmatic changes from that of 1996-1997 as a result of the incorporation of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in June 1996. The number of subprogrammes has been reduced from eight to the following four: (a) Shelter and social services, (b) Urban management, (c) Environment and infrastructure and (d) Assessment, monitoring and information.

IV.58. The Advisory Committee notes that in its decision 16/28 of 7 May 1997 on the draft work programme of Habitat for the biennium 1998-1999, the Commission on Human Settlements requested the secretariat of the Centre to prepare, by 15 June 1997, a revised work programme, taking into full account its conclusions and priority setting, plus an additional version organized according to the

structure of the Habitat Agenda, with a clear indication of linkages between paragraphs of the Habitat Agenda and the work programme. The revised draft work programme was to be subjected to review and approval, four weeks after its submission, by the Bureau of the Commission, with the support of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

IV.59. From the information provided to the Advisory Committee, it is not clear the extent to which the Commission on Human Settlements reviewed the programme of work of the Centre in terms of prospects for its full implementation. In this connection, the Committee invites the Commission to review and assess, in the light of the critical financial situation of the Centre and of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation,[15] the Centre's planned programme activities and outputs, in particular the recurrent and non-recurrent publications, with a view to determining which ones need to be dispensed with or postponed.

IV.60. The Advisory Committee recalls that for the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, the integration of all the administrative and support functions into one office in Nairobi entailed the transfer of resources from both regular budget and extrabudgetary resources of UNEP, Habitat and the United Nations Common Services, Nairobi, into the newly established United Nations Office at Nairobi. The Office of the United Nations Controller, in consultation with representatives of Habitat and UNEP agreed on proportions for the financing of the common administration.[16] In its report on the proposed budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for the biennium 1998-1999,[17] the Committee recommended that the basis for the cost distribution be reviewed. In this connection, the Committee notes that in paragraph 2 (d) of its resolution 16/19 of 7 May 1997 the Commission urged the Executive Director of Habitat to review the Centre's operational relationship with the United Nations Office at Nairobi. Furthermore, the Governing Council of UNEP, in its decision 19/22 of 7 February 1997, requested the Executive Director of UNEP to report, inter alia, on UNEP interaction with the United Nations Office at Nairobi and whether it is efficient and effective in delivering on the programmes of UNEP.

Section 14. Crime control

IV.61. Under section 14 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General estimates regular budget requirements of $5,411,300 (before recosting) for the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division for 1998-1999, as compared to $5,194,900 for 1996-1997, or a 4.1 per cent increase. Extrabudgetary resources are projected at $1,600,000 for 1998-1999 as compared to $1,521,300 for 1996-1997, or an increase of 5.2 per cent (see table 14.1).

IV.62. As indicated in table 14.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the Division for the biennium 1998-1999 is 21 (16 in the Professional category and above and 5 General Service). One General Service post is proposed for abolition. No Professional posts are proposed for abolition. As indicated in the table, the total number of extrabudgetary posts for the biennium 1998-1999 is 11 Professional posts (including nine associate experts at the P-2/1 level), representing an increase of 1 Professional post. Moreover, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Division is assisted by three type 1 gratis personnel, who provide expert advice and substantive input in general and judicial police activities and in criminal justice administration. The Committee was provided with an organizational chart showing the proposed organizational structure and post distribution for 1998-1999.

IV.63. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, the Division had four vacant posts against the regular budget (1 P-5, 1 P-3, 1 P-2 and 1 General Service). Proposed changes in the staffing table include the redeployment to the Division of one D-1 and one P-5 posts from the Office of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna in exchange for one P-4 and one P-3 posts. The D-1 post is proposed for the Deputy Director, who will also perform the functions of Secretary of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The P-5 post is proposed for the head of the Section on Operational Activities and Commission's Secretariat Section (see paras. 14.3 and 14.13). From the information provided, the Committee believes that convincing arguments have not yet been stated in support of the redeployment of the D-1 post to this Division.

IV.64. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice holds annual sessions in Vienna for eight working days. In addition, in its resolution 5/3 of 31 May 1996, the Commission requested its bureau to meet during the periods between sessions and to endeavour to hold inter-sessional meetings with the bureau of the Commission on Narcotics Drugs. It also established an Informal Consultative Group on Resource Mobilization (see para. 14.5). The Advisory Committee sought clarification on the number of meetings to be serviced by the Division. The Committee was informed that substantive servicing of intergovernmental/expert bodies included 12 meetings of the General Assembly (Third Committee), 10 of the General Assembly's special sessions on illicit drug production and trafficking, 12 of the Economic and Social Council, 32 of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 24 of the Commission's in-session working group, 12 of the Commission's Bureau, 12 of the Commission's inter-sessional consultations, 8 of the Commission's Informal Consultative Group on Resource Mobilization and 6 of the Commission's Working Group on Resources and Mandates.

IV.65. The Advisory Committee notes that the Division's work programme merely lists the number of meetings to be serviced and the number of reports to be prepared and submitted. In several instances, it is not clear what the output is going to be or by what means the secretariat intends to implement the work programme. For example, in paragraph 14.12 (b) (i), under promotion of legal instruments, these include the United Nations model treaties on extradition, mutual assistance in criminal matters, the transfer of proceedings in criminal matters and the transfer of foreign prisoners and the promotion of the International Code of Conduct for Public Officials.

IV.66. In the view of the Advisory Committee, it appears that the number of reports to be submitted to the Commission will be more than can be handled in 16 meetings. Moreover, the Committee notes that in 1999 the work programme will be particularly heavy owing to additional preparatory work for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders to be held in the year 2000. The Committee notes that there is no discussion in the report as to how the normal work programme will be adjusted to accommodate this extra work. The Committee believes that the number of meetings may not be adequately serviced and that the Commission may not have the capacity to receive and consider all the reports.

IV.67. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with a detailed description of the proposed programme of work for the Division for the biennium 1998-1999.[18] The Committee notes the discussion held by the Commission on the work programme and its decisions taken on strategic management and programme questions (see chapter IX of the report of the Commission on its sixth session[19] and resolution 6/1 of 9 May 1997). The Committee notes from paragraph 147 of

the Commission's report that it expressed concern over the continuing disparity between the number and breadth of the mandates and the resources available to meet them. It was pointed out in paragraph 149 of the report that the workload in the work programme, even though it reflected existing mandates, was far too heavy to be carried out within the resources provided.

IV.68. The Advisory Committee regrets, however, that no firm solution to this dichotomy was agreed upon. Some suggested approaches to the issue are outlined in paragraph 12 of the Commission's report, such as deletion of certain items from the proposed programme of work and funding of other items not through the regular budget but only with extrabudgetary funds, and the use of savings arising from streamlined parliamentary reporting to reinforce the operational capacity of the programme.

IV.69. In its resolution 6/1 on strategic management, the Commission reiterated its decision to curtail and streamline its reporting requirements and urged the Secretary-General to use his discretion in determining the necessity, form and length of such reporting. The Chairman of the Commission was requested to convene an informal working group of the members of the Commission to undertake, in consultation with its Bureau, a review of the programme mandates and resources with a view to establishing a more realistic relationship between them and that the review should focus on the expectations of Member States for the implementation of existing mandates, the requirements for meeting those expectations and the extent to which regular budget resources are to be used to support operational activities. The working group will consider the issue of maximizing the existing resource potential of the programme and of streamlining the agenda of the Commission. It is worth noting also that in section II of resolution 6/1, on resource mobilization, the Commission requested the Secretary-general to issue a consolidated appeal on crime prevention and criminal justice requirements to Governments.

Section 15. International drug control

IV.70. Under section 15 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General estimates regular budget requirements of $16,203,300 (before recosting) for the United Nations International Drug Control Programme for 1998-1999, as compared to $16,195,000 for 1996-1997. Extrabudgetary resources are projected at $162,298,000 for 1998-1999, as compared to $141,235,100 for 1996-1997, or an increase of 14.9 per cent (see table 15.1).

IV.71. As indicated in table 15.3, the total number of regular budget posts proposed for the Programme for the biennium 1998-1999 is 68 (44 in the Professional category and above and 24 General Service), representing a decrease of 5 regular budget posts (1 Professional and 4 General Service), as compared with the total of 73 regular budget posts for the biennium 1996-1997. As indicated in the table, the total number of extrabudgetary posts proposed for the 1998-1999 biennium is 237 (95 in the Professional category and above and 142 General Service), representing a decrease of 20 extrabudgetary Professional posts, as compared to 257 extrabudgetary posts for the biennium 1996-1997. The Advisory Committee was provided with an organizational chart showing the proposed organizational structure and post distribution for 1998-1999 and was informed that the Programme has been assisted by 20 associate experts at the P-2/1 level (not shown in the table). Upon request, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 April 1997, the Programme had 9 vacant posts (6 Professional and 3 General Service) under the regular budget.

IV.72. The General Assembly, in its resolution 45/179 of 21 December 1990, established the Programme as the body responsible for concerted international action in the field of drug abuse control. Programme activities are financed from the regular budget of the United Nations and by voluntary contributions for the Fund of the Programme. For the biennium 1994-1995, less than 10 per cent of Programme resources came from the regular budget of the United Nations and about 90.3 per cent from voluntary contributions for the Fund of the Programme[20]. The Fund was established by the General Assembly in section XVI of its resolution 46/185 C of 20 December 1991, as from 1 January 1992, under the direct responsibility of the Executive Director of the Programme for financing operational activities mainly in developing countries.

IV.73. The regular budget resources of the Programme are allocated mainly for servicing the intergovernmental bodies and the International Narcotics Control Board (an independent technical body, established by the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs). As regards voluntary contributions for the Fund, in section XVI, paragraph 2, of its resolution 46/185 C the General Assembly authorized the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to approve, on the basis of the proposals of the Executive Director of the Programme, both the budget of the programme of the Fund and the administrative and programme support costs budget, other than the expenditures borne by the regular budget of the United Nations. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee considers the reports of the Executive Director on the biennial budget estimates of the Fund and submits recommendations to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The next budget of the Fund will be considered by the Advisory Committee in the fall of 1997.

IV.74. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs holds regular annual sessions and a biennial resumed session devoted to administrative and budgetary matters. The Advisory Committee welcomes the coordination mechanism established between the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice mentioned in paragraph IV.64 above.

IV.75. With regard to the programme of work of the Programme, the Advisory Committee notes that, for 1998-1999, it has been restructured from eight to three subprogramme. The Committee notes, however, that there is no evidence from the reports of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs submitted to the 1997 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council[21] and of the International Narcotics Control Board for 1996[22] that the programme of work has been reviewed by these two bodies.

IV.76. Taking into account the fact that the Advisory Committee makes separate recommendations to the governing body of the Fund in respect of its biennial budget proposals (see para. IV.73 above), the Committee recommends that the presentation of section 15 of the regular budget be reviewed with a view to streamlining its content and explaining more precisely how the inputs from the regular budget are used to support the activities funded from the Fund. In the opinion of the Committee, the current narratives clutter the presentation of the proposals, with lengthy descriptions of activities which are not funded from the resources of the regular budget.

Notes

[1] See E/1997/27, E/1997/26 and E/CN.5/1997/11, chap. III.

[2] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/50/6/Rev.1), para. 8.66.

[3] Ibid., para. 9.54.

[4] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 7 and corrigendum (A/50/7 and Corr.1).

[5] Ibid., Supplement No. 6 (A/50/6/Rev.1), para. 10A.4.

[6] TD/B/43/2-TD/BWP/96.

[7] See, for example, Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 7 and corrigendum (A/50/7 and Corr.1), para. VII.17.

[8] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 5F (A/51/5/Add.6).

[9] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/52/25).

[10] UNEP/GC.19/18, para. 13.

[11] See UNEP/GC.19/L.1, annex, paras. 17-21.

[12] Ibid., para. 20.

[13] See, for example, HS/C/16/12/Add.1 and HS/C/15/8/Add.1.

[14] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 5H (A/51/5/Add.8).

[15] See HS/C/16/12/Add.1, paras. 11 and 12.

[16] See HS/C/15/8, paras. 32 and 33.

[17] HS/C/16/12/Add.1.

[18] E/CN.15/1997/20.

[19] See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 10 and corrigendum (E/1997/30-E/CN.15/1997/21 and Corr.1).

[20] See E/CN.7/1997/8, para. 8.

[21] E/1997/48.

[22] E/1997/56.